



Special Olympics Softball Coaches Quick Start Guide

Throwing

to propel or project through the air by a forward motion of the hand and arm

The skill of throwing in softball is an integral part of a team's defense. Throwing is how defensive players get the ball from one player to another. They "throw" the ball through the air to a teammate in order to try and get one of the offensive players (batter/runners) "out".

Grip – The athlete should grip the ball with 3 fingers across the seam of the ball when possible, with the little finger riding loosely on the ball. The knuckle lines under the fingertips should rest on the seam. This is so the fingers can pull down on the seams during release. (Athletes with smaller hands may need to use 4 fingers. Extra-large hands may be able to use two fingers.) The thumb is located under the ball beneath the index finger. The ball should not be in the palm of the hand.





Teaching Points

1. Variation: Athletes with small hands may place all four fingers on top of the ball, with thumb underneath.
2. Athletes with very large hands may try a two fingered grip with thumb underneath.
3. A too tight grip can prevent proper spin on the ball. The grip should be firm but not too tight, thus allowing the wrist to be flexible which creates backspin.
4. Touch the athlete's fingertips with your hands. Place the athlete's fingers in the correct position.
5. The finger pressure on the ball should be evenly distributed
6. Stand beside the athlete. Place softball in the athlete's hand and move his/her arm through a throwing motion.
7. Emphasize form. Stress one aspect of form at a time, work on it for a few minutes or for a certain number of throws and then move on to another aspect of form. Include a sufficient number of form throws at increasing distances in preparation for all-out throws in practice or competition.
8. Practice throwing over objects placed at different distances from a line to get proper release angle and throwing arc. Use football goal posts, improvised targets made from bamboo poles, wooden dowels, broomsticks and string or adapt other devices to practice releasing the ball.

Lower Body Drive

1. Open instep of the throwing foot slightly toward the target. (45degrees). This is the pivot foot. The pivot foot turns out toward the target to begin the throwing sequence (picture insert) see Ace guide
2. The foot on the glove-side should land at a 45 degree angle when transfer begins.
3. Weight should be balanced on the balls of the feet.
4. Lower body transfer begins as the front foot (glove-side) steps on line to the target, with the arm in the "fingers to the sky" position.
5. Weight transfer begins as the glove-side arm pulls down and into the chest, as the throwing arm comes forward into the release position.
6. Lower body weight transfer completes as the ball is released and follow through occurs. The ball-side leg (back leg) continues forward (drag of the foot).
7. Tell your athletes that the ball will go where their hand is pointing when they let go of it.
8. "Flipping" the wrist is another word for emphasizing "snapping" the wrist.
9. Use a striped ball when executing throwing drills.